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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515-6015

December 8, 2008

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Dear David,

Pursuant to (b)2 of Section 4 of the Rules of the Committee on Appropriations, we are writing to request that a special meeting of the Committee be called for the purposes of marking up the following appropriations bills:

- (1) The Fiscal Year 2009 Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act;
- (2) The Fiscal Year 2009 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Act;
- (3) The Fiscal Year 2009 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (complete consideration);
- (4) The Fiscal Year 2009 Legislative Branch Appropriations Act;
- (5) The Fiscal Year 2009 State, Foreign Operations and Related Agencies Appropriations Act; and
- (6) The Fiscal Year 2009 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

As longstanding Members of this Committee, with a combined total of over 75 years of Committee service, we cannot recall a single year in which this Committee has failed to markup over half of the annual appropriations bills.

According to press reports, it is the intent of House and Senate leadership to combine nine spending bills into an omnibus package to be presented to President-elect Obama shortly after he is sworn into office in late January. It is our understanding that our Appropriations Committee staff is now negotiating with their Senate counterparts on the nine Appropriations bills that have yet to be considered by the House and Senate.

David, it is one thing to have staff members from both bodies meeting to discuss issues, but none of these staff are elected Members of the House or Senate. We are greatly

disturbed that the Democrat leadership once again appears to be intent on making spending decisions —many involving only subcommittee-passed bills—without any real Member or Senator input or public scrutiny.

We are deeply disappointed by the fact that the Democrat leadership has failed to allow the Committee to fulfill its most fundamental responsibilities this year. Simply put, the inaction on appropriations bills this year is an historic dereliction of duty. During the six years of the Clinton Administration when Republicans controlled the Congress, every single appropriations bill was debated and reported out of Full Committee and 77 of 78 appropriations bills were considered on the House floor. Even in the final year of the Clinton Administration, Congress enacted all fiscal year 2001 appropriations bills prior to President Clinton leaving office, despite the fact that the most contentious bill was not conferenced until December of 2000. Unfortunately, this historical standard has not been upheld by the current Democrat majority. This year, over \$813 billion, or 78 percent, of the entire fiscal year 2009 discretionary budget has yet to be considered by the Members of the Full Committee, let alone by the full House.

It is of critical importance that elected Members and Senators complete their work on the fiscal year 2009 appropriations bills. Therefore, we request that you immediately schedule a Committee meeting so that the 66 Members of the Appropriations Committee can fulfill their constitutional responsibility to represent their constituents.

We believe that in a time of recession, the American taxpayer deserves to know that decisions regarding their money are made in a fair and open process that includes the participation of the Members who were elected to represent them. Given that thus far the Committee has failed to do its own job, we must avoid pointless endeavors regarding matters that are well outside the expertise and jurisdiction of the Appropriations Committee. We believe the American people, the Congress, and the Committee would be best served by the completion of the annual appropriations work mandated by House Rules and the Constitution.

Thank you for your attention to this most urgent matter. We look forward to your prompt action to schedule these bills for Committee consideration.

Sincerely,


Jerry Lewis


C.W. Bill Young


Harold Rogers